

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson Jr. (D-IL-2) released the following statement regarding Congressman Tom Delay's exit speech from Congress:

"Members of Congress and children in our schools repeat the Pledge of Allegiance every day they are in session. It concludes with the phrase "with liberty and justice for all." Today, Representative Tom DeLay gave adequate and ultimate affirmation to the concept of liberty and freedom by repeatedly affirming freedom, but he failed to mention justice or equality one time in his last speech on the House floor.

"Freedom and human dignity, he said were the two guiding principles of Conservative thought. Slaveholders were Conservatives and they exercised their freedom by owning slaves, but the slave did not possess equality. Liberty and freedom without justice and equality leads to tyranny. It is good that Representative DeLay and political Conservatives operate from principles--I wish Democrats and Liberals had such convictions and operated more consistently from principles. But Liberal Democratic principles, like the Pledge of Allegiance, must be more holistic and include liberty *and justice for all*.

"As a progressive Democrat, I too operate from principle. The first principle is human rights for all human beings. And the second principle is equal protection under the law for all Americans. Those principles lead me to oppose the so-called Marriage Amendment to the Constitution, that would add discrimination to our most sacred document for the first time in our history. Instead, my principles lead me to support adding the following Constitutional amendments: a Constitutional amendment granting every American a citizenship right to vote; a Constitutional amendment providing every American student with an education of equal high quality; and an amendment bestowing healthcare of equal high quality to every American. His principles of freedom and human dignity lead him to support a discriminatory amendment and deny freedom to women on the issue of choice. My principles lead me to support amendments that enable both freedom and justice to grow together. This I believe is more consistent with the full meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance."